

Observe Respect & Compassion for Animals

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November 2, 2001

Via Facsimile Transmission and U.S. Mail 11/2/01

Office of Protected Resources
Permits Division (F/PR1)
National Marine Fisheries Service
1315 East-West Highway, Room 13705
Silver Spring, MD 20910

RE: Proposed Rule Amendments to MMPA
50 CFR 216
Docket Number 001031304-0304-01; ID Number 080299B

To Whom it May Concern:

This letter is being written on behalf of the members of ORCA to address the proposed amendments to the Marine Mammal Protection Act (**MMPA**) regarding regulations for permits to capture or import marine mammals for purposes of public display.

We support the proposed amendments as written and, in fact, strongly believe that the regulations for such permits, capture and importation should either retain their current status or be strengthened. It is also important that permits for the capture and importation of marine mammals remain under the jurisdiction of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Weakening these regulations could pose a serious risk to the population, health and safety of the animals, as well as the general public.

If the capture and importation of marine mammals into the United States is to be allowed, it should only be done after a thorough permit process is completed and approved, and such process must involve public comment as well as thorough governmental agency review. Weakening these standards would not be beneficial to anyone – animals or humans – and could only lead to additional problems.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Cathy O'Brien
Director